

# The Transforming Power

## INTRODUCTION: *Approaching the threshold...*

The spiritual forces latent in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, which stand prepared to transform the soul of every would-be believer, are of such magnitude as to be utterly indescribable. Bahá'u'lláh Himself chose to illustrate this transforming power primarily through the use of metaphors.

Most of the verses we are about to study were selected by Shoghi Effendi to inspire every believer to “discharge more effectively your divinely appointed, continually multiplying duties.” May each one of us take to heart the opportunity of spiritual rebirth offered by the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh, and with fearless faith, arise to receive the transforming power generated by the Word of God.

(White Peacock Butterfly)



*“And yet, is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind...”*

— Bahá'u'lláh

## OBJECTIVE: *A look to the horizon...*

### Facilitator

Review the following objective with the participants:

The objective of this study is to become informed, inspired, and strengthened by understanding the transforming power of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

## THE STUDY PROCESS: *Attaining the water of life...*

### Facilitator

Review the following study process with the participants. Then study the numbered quotations on the following pages, one at a time as described below.

1. **READING:** *A drink from the cup of guidance...*

Have two participants take turns reading the quotation out loud so that it is read twice.

2. **CONFIRMING MEANING:** *A spray from the fountain of light...*

A. If anyone would like to have better understanding of a word used in the quotation, now is the time to refer to its substitute phrase, definition or synonym, which can be found in the boxes below each quotation. Read the substitute phrase, definition or synonym out loud so everyone can hear.

- B. Read the sentence again that contains the word you selected, while **substituting for that word**, its given phrase, definition or synonym from the box below the quotation.
- C. If anyone would like a better understanding of another word, repeat the process above until everyone is satisfied with their understanding of the words in the quotation.
- D. Have the quotation read one more time by one of the participants.
3. **FINDING VALUE:** *A breath from the spirit of inspiration...*

In the tradition of the “talking circle” ask the participants to take turns sharing, one at a time, in a round, **WHAT WAS PERSONALLY MOST MEANINGFUL FROM THE QUOTATION AND WHY**. Remind the participants that *whatever* is shared should be considered as a valid perspective, and that in this *exploratory study* there are no right or wrong perceptions and no lesser or greater understandings. All are therefore asked to avoid comments, corrections, or judgments on the perceived insights of others. If someone proposes a question, the participants are asked to humbly defer to the facilitator for answers.

**QUOTATIONS:** *Within the meadows of Thy nearness...*

1. *The vitality of men’s belief in God is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it? Is it within human power, O Hakim, to effect in the constituent elements of any of the minute and indivisible particles of matter so complete a transformation as to transmute it into purest gold? Perplexing and difficult as this may appear, the still greater task of converting satanic strength into heavenly power is one that We have been empowered to accomplish. The Force capable of such a transformation transcendeth the potency of the Elixir itself. The Word of God, alone, can claim the distinction of being endowed with the capacity required for so great and far-reaching a change.*

*(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 200)*

**alone:** exclusive of anything or anyone else  
**capacity:** receptive power and potential  
**constituent:** parts that form, compose, or make up  
**converting:** producing a spiritual change [of]  
**corrosion:** weakening and destructive nature  
**distinction:** special characteristics  
**effect:** cause to come about  
**Elixir:** potent single essence capable of causing a conversion from one thing to another  
**empowered:** given the faculties and abilities  
**endowed:** furnished, gifted, or provided  
**Force:** divine power that can overcome all resistance  
**heavenly:** a holy and sacred  
**matter:** the substance things are made of  
**medicine:** “...medicine of the heavenly Teachings...” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, SWAB, p. 275)  
**minute:** very small  
**potency:** capacity and ability to achieve or bring about particular results

**power:** substantial spiritual force  
**restore it:** bring it back to its former or original state  
**Revelation:** communication of God’s will to man by Bahá’u’lláh  
**revive it:** return it from suspension and neglect to activity and life  
**satanic:** selfish, wicked, or evil [type of]  
**strength:** powers to use or resist force  
**transcendeth:** extends far above and beyond  
**transformation:** change in form, character, and function  
**transmute it:** alter or change it to the higher form  
**vitality:** life-giving power  
**vitals:** essential parts  
**wholesome:** morally sound and vigorous  
**We:** used by one in authority to denote himself  
**Word of God:** Revelation of God, today Bahá’u’lláh’s Writings

2. *It behooveth thee to exert thine utmost to attain unto this Elixir which, in one fleeting breath, causeth the west of ignorance to reach the east of knowledge, illuminates the darkness of night with the resplendence of the morn, guideth the wanderer in the wilderness of doubt to the well-spring of the Divine Presence and Fount of certitude, and conferreth upon mortal souls the honour of acceptance into the Ridván of immortality.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 157-58)

**acceptance:** being received willingly and favorably  
**behooveth:** is advantageous and necessary for  
**certitude:** a condition of unflinching certainty and sureness; *“With a certitude that none can question, all men would cleave to His commandments, and would scrupulously observe them.”* (Bahá'u'lláh, *GWB*, p. 117)  
**conferreth upon:** gives graciously to  
**darkness of night:** figuratively — absence of spiritual knowledge and goodness  
**Divine:** relating directly to God's  
**doubt:** faithlessness in God  
**east:** figuratively — farthest reaches  
**Elixir:** potent single essence capable of causing conversion — the transforming power of the Word of God

**exert:** energetically put forth  
**Fount:** sustaining source  
**illuminates:** gives intellectual and spiritual enlightenment, insight, and knowledge to  
**immortality:** unending existence; eternal life  
**morn:** figuratively — dawn of spiritual knowledge and goodness  
**mortal:** subject to death [type of ]  
**Presence:** *“By Presence, therefore, is meant the Presence of the One Who is His Viceregent amongst men.”* (Bahá'u'lláh, *ESW*, p. 118)  
**resplendence:** great brilliance  
**Ridván:** paradise  
**utmost:** able best  
**well-spring:** source of a continual supply  
**west:** figuratively — farthest reaches  
**wilderness:** empty or pathless region

3. *Through the movement of Our Pen of Glory We have, at the bidding of the Omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this worldwide regeneration.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 80)

**bidding:** expressed order  
**breathed:** instilled or infused  
**created things:** *“I testify that no sooner had the First Word proceeded, through the potency of Thy will and purpose, out of His [the Báb's] mouth, and the First Call gone forth from His lips than the whole creation was revolutionized, and all that are in the heavens and all that are on earth were stirred to the depths. Through that Word the realities of all created things were shaken, were divided, separated, scattered, combined and reunited, disclosing, in both the contingent world and the heavenly kingdom, entities of a new creation, and revealing, in the*

*unseen realms, the signs and tokens of Thy unity and oneness.”* (Bahá'u'lláh, *PM*, p. 295)  
**instilled:** imparted gradually  
**Omnipotent:** infinitely powerful and influential  
**Ordainer:** One who destines things to be; God  
**Our:** used by one in authority to denote himself  
**Pen:** refers to the revelation of the Word of God  
**potency:** capacity and ability to achieve or bring about particular results  
**proclaim:** give outward indications of  
**regeneration:** spiritual awakening or rebirth  
**We:** used by one in authority to denote himself  
**word:** expressed idea or concept of the Revelation  
 Writings of Bahá'u'lláh (see *TOB*, p. 242, ¶ 3)

4. *Every single letter proceeding from Our mouth is endowed with such regenerative power as to enable it to bring into existence a new creation — a creation the magnitude of which is inscrutable to all save God. He verily hath knowledge of all things.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 80)

**enable:** provide the means and opportunity for  
**endowed:** furnished or provided  
**inscrutable:** not comprehensible or understandable  
**letter:** expressed idea or concept of the Holy Word; *“One single letter of Thy Book is the mother of all utterances...”* (Bahá'u'lláh, *PM*, p. 245)

**magnitude:** great importance or value  
**creation:** character or spiritual attire  
**Our:** used by one in authority to denote himself  
**regenerative power:** great ability to effect spiritual awakening or rebirth  
**save:** except; but

5. *It is in Our power, should We wish it, to enable a speck of floating dust to generate, in less than the twinkling of an eye, suns of infinite, of unimaginable splendor, to cause a dewdrop to develop into vast and numberless oceans, to infuse into every letter such a force as to empower it to unfold all the knowledge of past and future ages.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, pp. 80-81)

**dewdrop:** figuratively — one with the smallest amount of divine knowledge; “*Wert thou to attain to but a dewdrop of the crystal waters of divine knowledge, thou wouldst readily realize that true life is not the life of the flesh but the life of the spirit.*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *KI*, p. 120)

**empower:** give the faculties or abilities to  
**enable:** provide the means and opportunity for

**generate:** bring into existence  
**infuse:** put new life and significance

**letter:** individual believer with great spiritual capacities — “*Bless Thou, moreover, O my God, them Who are Thy Words and Thy Letters...*” ☞

(Bahá'u'lláh, *PM*, p. 223); expressed idea or concept of the Holy Word

**oceans:** figuratively — divine understandings; “*...the oceans of inner meaning and explanation...*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *ESW*, p. 147)

**Our:** used by one in authority to denote himself  
**speck of floating dust:** figuratively — one with virtually no spiritual qualities; “*...whosoever Thou dost abase is made lower than dust, nay, less than nothing.*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *ESW*, p. 10)

**splendor:** figuratively — illuminating spiritual knowledge and goodness

**We:** used by one in authority to denote himself

6. *By the righteousness of the one true God! If one speck of a jewel be lost and buried beneath a mountain of stones, and lie hidden beyond the seven seas, the Hand of Omnipotence would assuredly reveal it in this Day, pure and cleansed from dross.*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 80)

**buried:** concealed or covered from view

**Day:** specified time, age, or period

**dross:** figuratively — worthless impurities of “*earthly defilements*” (*GWB*, p. 262), “*sins and transgressions*” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *BP*, p. 153)

**jewel:** figuratively — “*The light of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun and the radiance thereof. Whoso attaineth unto it is accounted as a jewel among men.*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *TOB*, p. 36)

**lost:** unable to find the way

**mountain:** vast number

**Omnipotence:** unlimited power and authority; God

**pure:** free and clean from fault, blame, or sin

**reveal it:** by divine means make it known

**speck:** very small sample

**stones:** figuratively — “*...stones of idle fancy...*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *KI* p. 11, *TOB*, p. 139)

**the seven seas:** figuratively — all that has been navigated by man

7. *How great is the Cause! How staggering the weight of its message! This is the Day of which it hath been said: “O my son! verily God will bring everything to light though it were but the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and hidden in a rock, or in the heavens or in the earth; for God is subtle, informed of all.”*

(Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 107)

**Cause:** Faith of God

**Day:** specified time, age, or period

**earth:** figuratively — wisdom of the heart; “*...by the term ‘earth’ is meant the earth of understanding and knowledge...*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *KI*, p. 48)

**grain of mustard seed:** “*...a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh*” ☞

*greater than all herbs....*” (Jesus, Mark 4.31-32)

**great:** markedly superior in character and quality

**heavens:** “*By ‘heaven’ is meant the heaven of divine Revelation...*” (Bahá'u'lláh, *KI*, p. 44)

**light:** a clear and understandable knowledge

**rock:** firmly established belief

**staggering:** astonishing and overwhelming

**subtile:** keenly perceptive

**weight:** mass, seriousness, and importance

8. *Say: The springs that sustain the life of these birds are not of this world. Their source is far above the reach and ken of human apprehension. Who is there that can put out the light which the snow-white Hand of God hath lit? Where is he to be found that hath the power to quench the fire which hath been kindled through the might of thy Lord, the All-Powerful, the All-Compelling, the Almighty? ... Say: The fierce gales and whirlwinds of the world and its peoples can never shake the foundation upon which the rock-like stability of My chosen ones is based.*

*(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 341)*

**All-Compelling:** One solely and completely able to overcome resistance or unwillingness by irresistible force  
**apprehension:** comprehension or understanding  
**based:** founded and supported  
**birds:** chosen believers  
**chosen ones:** the followers of a Manifestation during the time of His Dispensation  
**fire:** figuratively — liveliness, passion, and enthusiasm  
**foundation:** underlying base for establishment and support  
**gales and whirlwinds:** *“He hath protected you from the mighty winds of misbelief, and the tempestuous gales of impiety...”* (Bahá'u'lláh, ↗)

*ESW, p. 25)*  
**ken:** range of perception, understanding, or knowledge  
**kindled:** stirred up, excited, or aroused  
**light:** emanating spiritual knowledge and goodness  
**quench:** reduce or put out  
**shake:** weaken from mental or emotional disturbance  
**snow-white:** purely sacred, hallowed, and holy  
**source:** ultimate origin of supply  
**springs:** ultimate sources  
**stability:** firmness in purpose and resolve  
**sustain:** uphold and maintain  
**world:** material existence; state of reality

**APPLICATION:** *Showing forth divine light...*

**Facilitator**

Read the first paragraph and ask the participants to state their ideas out loud. Then, read through the last paragraph and allow time for the participants to write out their plans for action. These plans are not shared.

**IMAGINING POSSIBILITIES:** *Visions of radiant lights...*

How **could** the concepts in this study on *The Transforming Power* be applied in a person’s life in these modern times? Begin your answers with: **“One could....”** Suggest as many ideas as you want.

**DECIDING ACTION:** *Mirroring a beam of light...*

Bahá'u'lláh wrote: *“It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action....”* From your experience in this study on *The Transforming Power*, describe what **you** are inspired to put into reality and action. **I will make conscious efforts to...**

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*A Prayer for Transformation – by the Báb...*

*Glorified be Thy Name, O Lord! In whom shall I take refuge while Thou art in truth my God and my Beloved; unto whom shall I turn for shelter while Thou art my Lord and my Possessor; and towards whom shall I flee while Thou art in truth my Master and my Sanctuary; and whom shall I implore while Thou art in truth my Treasure and the Goal of my desire; and through whom shall I plead before Thee, while Thou art in truth my highest aspiration and supreme desire? Every hope hath been frustrated save the yearning for Thy heavenly grace, and every door is barred except the portal leading to the well-spring of Thy blessings.*

*I beseech Thee, O my Lord, by Thy most effulgent splendour, before whose brightness every soul humbly boweth down and prostrateth itself in adoration for Thy sake — a splendour before whose radiance fire is turned into light, the dead are brought to life and every difficulty is changed into ease. I entreat Thee by this great, this wondrous splendour and by the glory of Thine exalted sovereignty, O Thou Who art the Lord of indomitable power, to transform us through Thy bounty into that which Thou Thyself dost possess and enable us to become fountains of Thy light, and graciously vouchsafe unto us that which beseemeth the majesty of Thy transcendent dominion. For unto Thee have I raised my hands, O Lord, and in Thee have I found sheltering support, O Lord, and unto Thee have I resigned myself, O Lord, and upon Thee have I placed my whole reliance, O Lord, and by Thee am I strengthened, O Lord.*

*Verily there is no power nor strength except in Thee.*

*(Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 179)*